

to see an excited young person begging me to come to the fourth grade room "right away, please." This urgent summons often means a new map attack. Perhaps I am asked to decide a competition between two classes, or between boys and girls, as to which floor map or which set of maps is superior. I have to be slow in my consideration, and tactfully see virtue in both maps, of course. Perhaps I am called in to share the excitement of a new map project born of a sudden inspiration. Whatever it is, it means about the same thing. It means that grade four loves to learn, by formal and informal methods of expression, to interpret and to set down that fascinating shorthand of the geographer—MAPS.

EDNA A. COLLAMORE

#### A BLAST AGAINST HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS COMMUTING TO BOSTON

"They talk interminably about grades, athletics, and personalities. They do not read the newspapers. They never discuss the content of their studies. . . Neither their families, their teachers, nor public opinion have ever taught them the possibilities of being educated and cultivated—of being interesting people. . .

"The time they waste is appalling. They could do the larger part of their studies on those trains. They could read a good newspaper thoroughly; they might read any one of half a dozen well edited and well written magazines. . . "

ROBERT E. ROGERS

Deeds are greater than words. They have a life, mute, but undeniable; and they grow. They people the vacuity of time, and make it green and worthy. We must work because the capacity to work is given to us and if no fruit of our work ever comes to us, so much the greater honor we are entitled to if we work faithfully.

#### INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS IN ENGLISH CLASSES

*A proposal that English teachers shall help make pupils more alert to what is going on in the world. International relations offer a basis for oral and written composition.*

EDUCATION is on trial not only before the tribunals of legislators, of citizens' committees, and of taxpayers; it is on trial before itself. It too must have a new deal. It too must have a care for the forgotten man.

The forgotten man in our scheme is the man who goes through elementary and high school and then goes out to make a living, rear a family, and take his place as a functioning citizen in a democracy. Many of the facts and skills he has acquired will cease to function when the commencement speaker has admonished him and his classmates to live the good life.

Educators have long insisted on the necessity of building attitudes as well as imparting knowledge and skills, but we have often dealt out proper attitudes with the left hand while we dealt out improper ones with the right hand.

We have been particularly remiss in our treatment of public relations, and especially of international relations. We have sent forth our graduates with the erroneous conception that all important questions of domestic or international policy can be answered by the application of such stock phrases as "no entangling alliances," "...divided we fall," "all men are created free and equal," and "Give me liberty or give me death." We have sent them into the world with the idea that there is a certain infallibility in the American type of democracy; that the American soldier is the only

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soldier who is brave and true; that all Italians are "wops"; that all Russians wear long, uncouth beards; and that somehow God and the American eagle will see to it that no harm befalls "The Land of the Free." In short, we have nurtured what someone has called "the God's-country complex."

We have reserved the English period for English teaching. We have allowed our students to build up their own simple system of thinking in terms of slogans, epigrams, and the like, for want of any other system. Our sin has been largely one of omission.

What has happened? Our forgotten man has been rudely disillusioned—partly so, at least. He has seen a serious breakdown in our social and economic life. He has seen some of our most cherished institutions challenged and overthrown. He has found that either God or the American eagle has fallen down on the job. And his disillusionment has not always been wholesome. A man who has accepted a proposition on blind faith and found it partly wrong is inclined to believe it is all wrong. He is in a fair way to become a cynic.

His cynicism is the more complete because he still clings to the traditional attitudes regarding Italians, Russians, and citizens of other countries, or, at best, looks upon them as a "bunch of foreigners" who are no concern of his as long as they mind their own business. And he still thinks that Washington's much abused warning about entangling alliances is the only thing we need pay attention to in our dealing with other countries.

It is all very well for us to teach our students that life is real and earnest, but let us not send them into the world believing that life is simple. They may as well know the truth—that it is extremely complicated and ever-changing; that it cannot be reduced to a few simple rules or slogans. I can think of no better way to impress this

truth than to make students alert to what is going on in the world. Our daily papers are full of dispatches from Berlin, Paris, Geneva, Tokio, Leningrad, Havana, and Rome that have a vital bearing on the welfare of the United States.

This is not the business of the social science department. It is the business of the school. And the English teacher (let us hope) is a very important part of the school. Attitudes on social, political, and economic questions should be ready to function at all times, just as language skills should be ready to function at all times. In fact, I doubt that we can justify the teaching of any subject that functions during only one class period of the school day, however much value it may have in adult life.

It is far from true that we should use international relations as a basis for composition work only because it is our duty to do so. We English teachers make the uncovering of interesting composition material one of our main concerns. And, fortunately, we are teaching in an era when international relations are very vital and often extremely dramatic. However much our statesmen may emphasize "splendid isolation," this is truly the International Age.

But if international relations are to be used successfully in composition work, they must be given a less superficial treatment than is usually accorded them. Many high school and college students find articles on international relations deadly because of the difficulty of reading them intelligently. There is little inspiration in trying to read such articles if one does not know what is meant by a buffer state, a cheap dollar, a plebiscite. The teacher will need to go to considerable pains to clarify these terms in the thinking of his students.

Name-tests given to students as "stunts" to show how ignorant they are about world affairs are worthless as constructive measures. It is amusing to know that a college freshman thinks Litvinoff the name of an



orchestra leader and Ramsay Macdonald is a professional golfer, but such knowledge has no practical value. Let us put into the hands of our students the machinery for intelligent reading, and the names will take care of themselves.

It is not enough to ask our students to write an occasional theme on international problems. We must develop in them a day-by-day consciousness that the world about us is very much alive, and that the destinies of our country are being affected by each new development. If an important story breaks in the morning paper, let us see that it receives attention before it is stale. If we want our students to be alert on international questions, we must give unmistakable signs of being alert ourselves.

My students know they are expected to keep in touch with important international developments, but I rarely assign specific reading except for special oral reports of rather formal character. After the discussion of some problem, I frequently recommend articles in the leading magazines.

Although I assign some formal themes on international questions and often ask students to write for fifteen minutes during the class period on a timely subject, I consider the informal discussions most important. These encourage students to speak extemporaneously under conditions approximately those of discussions in real life. If properly directed, this is the most beneficial kind of composition work.

Students like this use of international relations as a basis for oral and written composition. Many have told me that they never before paid any attention to what was going on outside our country. As a group they are more attentive to oral reports than when such subjects as "How to Make a Diving Helmet" or "The Requirements of a Good Camping Site" were used. Only one or two in a class were interested in making a diving helmet or choosing a camp site. International relations are potentially interesting

to everybody who can read intelligently about them. And they are of vital concern in the process of education if the graduates of our schools are to have a voice in determining national and international policies.

J. HAL CONNOR

## THEN AND NOW

*Instead of fitting the child to the school, good teachers have now learned to fit the school to the child.*

WHEN I was a little girl in the primary grades, one day my father gave me ten cents to buy a box of colored pencils and a tablet. I took them to school and after finishing my assigned tasks in remarkably quick time, I took out my recently acquired materials and began to draw. Never had a child applied herself more diligently; in fact, I was so quiet and interested that the teacher made her way to my desk before I was aware of her presence. When she beheld the blue sky, green grass, with trees in the foreground and trees in the distance, she said in her severest voice, "You naughty child, wasting your good time in school, spending your father's hard-earned money foolishly! Stand up, so that every one can see what a naughty child you are," and I stood. After that I had little interest in drawing.

Years after I came up for the final examinations in a Kindergarten Training School. It so happened that the examinations were oral, given by the principal of the school—a nice motherly sort of woman. When it came time for the drawing examination five of us were sent to the board at one time. "Draw a maple tree." "Draw an elm tree." My turn came. I was literally shaking. "Mary, draw a horse." I was visibly moved by this time, and in a voice filled with tears I replied, "I can't draw a horse." The demand came again and, in addition to the tone of voice with which we were all familiar, the examiner dropped her spectacles